Sandy Walker

Receive God's Love

It Will Change Your Life!

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Prologue

I am experiencing God's loving presence right now. I don't have the words to describe this experience to you but I want to try.

It is so real!

His living breathing presence is right here right now in this room as I write these words. It's like a holy energy that shifts the atmosphere. I can feel my heart responding to it with joy! There's also a background feeling of peace settled over the entire room.

Take a moment and tune into the atmosphere of the room where you are right now. Close your eyes and ask God's Spirit to make you aware of God's presence. I hope you too can begin to get a taste and a feel for what this is like. It's life-changing!

I want to start singing and praising God loudly right now, but it's late and the rest of my household is asleep. It would not be kind to be loud in this moment so instead, in my heart and my mind, I shout praises to Jesus while I whisper them quietly. Thank you, Lord, for Your goodness! You are amazing beyond measure! There is none who compares with You, no not one. I am so happy that You are here! Thank You so much for letting me experience Your presence now. Thank You for the abundance of Your Love toward me and toward the readers of this book. God bless them with a deep revelation of Your Love and Your goodness to them. Thank you.

Introduction

Receiving the love of God changed my life and it still does every single day. For years I wanted to experience it but it seemed elusive. I knew the Bible verse that said God so loved the world that He gave His only son that whoever believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

But I could not tangibly feel that love. Have you ever felt it?

I also noticed that no one I knew ever talked about feeling God's love for them. I heard stories of answers to prayer and good things happening to people. But no one ever said, "Wow, I just feel so loved by God right now." Have you ever heard anyone say something like that?

So it seems like the concept is there that God loves us, according to what the Bible says. But the actual tangible expression of God's love seems only theoretical. It's in our heads but not in our hearts. No wonder we have a hard time loving our neighbor.

How can you love if you've never been loved well?

I wrestled with these questions for years as a practicing Christian. How could I ever learn to love another person if I did not feel loved by God? Love is not meant to be theoretical - it's meant to be tangible and personal.

Maybe you've also struggled with this idea. Why does God feel so far away, up in heaven somewhere? Why don't I feel loved by God? What does that even mean? What does it look like or feel like?

Together we are going to find out because I finally DID figure out how to experience God's

love and it surprised me! NO ONE explained to me how to receive this love.

Lots of people explained that Jesus came as God's Son to show me how much God loved me. Many preachers spoke about my need to accept Jesus as my savior. But that did not translate to my heart as being loved or feeling the love of God. The emphasis was always on something I had to do - I had to pray to accept Christ into my heart and life. I had to obey God's commands or else suffer the consequences. The emphasis was on my response to what God did for me by sending Jesus.

But where was the tangible love?

People told me Christ died for me but without the emotional or relational context, that's just a historical fact. Or it was an interpretation of the facts, based on your religious perspective.

And it was emphasized to me time and time again, You just gotta have faith - don't go by how you feel. Don't trust your feelings. Faith and feelings don't mix well.

So ignore your emotions, just choose God out of the truth you know in your head (from reading the Bible or being told what to believe) and everything will work out in the end.

I kept searching - I knew there had to be more. My heart was hungry for God's love.

The good news is God's love is real. It is tangible. You can receive it and FEEL it inside of you. It will change your whole life - how you see everything around you. It gives you a HUGE shift in perspective and in the way you feel about yourself and others.

And it is for YOU. Not just everyone else - YOU too.

You can receive it personally. You can feel loved by God. You can know that you know that you know that God loves you, really loves you and won't leave you, no matter what.

This is possible, even for you. Yes, I know you may feel disqualified … but please keep reading. Don't give up now. This book is for YOU. You were drawn to it for a reason. Hang in

there!

This book is for you if you have no faith in God.

This book is for you if you used to have faith and then left the faith of your upbringing.

This book is for you if you have faith in God, but you have questions no one wants to answer.

This book is for you if you wish you could feel loved by God but you don't.

This book is especially for you if you feel unworthy of God's love for any reason.

Keep reading … you'll be surprised by what you find here. I promise.

Receiving God's Love

God loves you SO much and He wants you to know and experience His love. This is not just head knowledge, but can also be heart knowledge.

Many people feel emotionally overwhelmed by life's challenges. Every day things come into our lives that we have to deal with that can make us feel overwhelmed, powerless and unable to cope. We turn to other things to give us strength, like coffee, alcohol, drugs or other ways to help us deal with the pain of feeling overwhelmed and powerless.

There is a way out! God provides the emotional strength, courage and support to handle anything that life throws at us. Most people don't know this. I didn't know it for decades.

Let's talk about what it means to receive God's love. It seems so simple yet very few people actually do it!

To receive something means

- to accept something that is offered
- to take into the mind by agreeing with it
- to gain knowledge of
- to permit to enter
- to embrace
- to take in
- to hold

Are you willing to receive God's love?

This means that you are willing to accept His offering of love to you.

You are willing to take it into your mind by agreeing that it is for you.

You are willing to gain the knowledge of His love by experience, not just in theory.

You are willing to permit His love to enter your heart and mind.
You are willing to be embraced by God and to embrace Him in return.
You are willing to take in God's love and hold onto it.

Just like when someone offers you a gift, you have an active part to take in receiving that gift. If they are holding it and extending it to you in their hands, you have to open up your hands and take the gift from them. So God has a part to play and YOU have a part to play.

God offers His love to everyone! There is no limit to His love. He freely offers it to every single human being as the good Father that He is. He created us in His image and He is love! So your very nature is Love. You were created in the image of Love.

I think that is why we long for love more than anything else. It is who we truly are. When you strip away everything else in life, love is all that really matters. That's why babies and young children just naturally love everyone around them, including family pets. They are full of love. It shines in their eyes when they smile at you.

We are each created in love for love to be God's demonstration of love on the earth. In order to be that example of love, we need a close relationship with the source of Love Himself.

You may not come from a background that taught you faith in God. That's okay. God loves you too and He knows you well. You can choose to open your heart to His love and then get to know Him. It's not hard - it's simply a choice.

In this book I describe the love I have received from God through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus came to show us what God's love looks like. Many people have depicted God as angry and that makes them afraid of God. Jesus showed us that God's primary passion is love for us. He shows love in everything He does. He created the entire world for us to enjoy. Think of all the beautiful things there are in the world - rainbows, butterflies, puppies and kittens, good food, sunsets, mountains and oceans - these were all made FOR US. That's love.

What makes God angry is when things hurt us and separate us from His love. Many of us chose to do things our own way because we didn't know we had a loving heavenly Father to

help us. We became closed off to His love because we didn't know any better. We chose instead to be self-serving and just look out for our own interests.

Jesus came to show us what it looks like to have a relationship with God like a child has with his or her father. A trusting, supportive relationship. He said that all those who believed in Him, He would give the right to become children of God. Isn't that wonderful?

Wouldn't it be nice to have a good father who can take care of everything that concerns you? Wouldn't you like to have someone who is there for you with advice and guidance in making decisions in life? I sure would!

If you struggle with having faith, I hope this book will help you open your heart to God's love. It is the best thing that can happen to you - knowing and receiving God's love for you. God offers it to us, it's our part to choose to receive it.

Here are some verses from the Bible that talk about His love.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:16-17

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Now hope does not disappoint, because **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.** Romans 5:5

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and **the love of God,** and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ

Jesus, **that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:4-10

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; **that you, being rooted and grounded in love,** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—**to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.** Ephesians 3:14-19

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and **of love** and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! I John 3:1

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. I John 3:16

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us,** that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that **He loved us and sent His Son** to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if **God so loved us,** we also ought to love one another. I John 4:7-11

The first step toward receiving God's love is believing that it is possible to receive His love.

The first step toward receiving God's love is believing that it is possible to receive His love. You might have some barriers to receiving His love - I certainly did! In the next chapter I will share some tools that helped me open my heart to God's love by removing the obstacles that were there.

Barriers to Receiving God's Love (& How to Remove Them)

Do any of these statements ring true? Notice which ones jump out to you:

I don't deserve God's love.

I am not worthy of God's love.

God loves the whole world but not me personally.

Just have faith - don't rely on your feelings.

God's love is not something you can actually feel.

God doesn't have emotions so I can't feel God's love for me.

God is too big to notice me or care for me personally.

God is unknowable.

Don't go by your feelings; that's not faith.

You don't have to feel God's love, just believe in it.

God's love is sound doctrine, not an experience.

God shows His love to other people but not to me.

God doesn't love me - I'm too bad.

I'm too far away from God.

I've done a lot of bad things - God couldn't possibly love me.

I failed God.

I turned my back on God when I was disappointed by the church.

God let me down - God wasn't who I thought He was.

I don't know what I believe about God. Why would God love me?

I don't believe in God. Why should I? Look at all the evil in the world and especially the bad stuff religion has done in the name of God.

Each one of these statements is a barrier to receiving God's tangible love. Tangible means you can FEEL it.

Can you imagine feeling so deeply loved that it chases all your fear away?

Can you imagine feeling safe in the world?

Can you imagine feeling confident in the face of evil or bad things happening?

Can you imagine having a place to run to when life feels overwhelming? Somewhere safe that makes you feel confident that you can handle whatever is coming your way?

What if God's love is real and you have been told things that prevented you from receiving it? What if you've been told mistruths or misperceptions about God's goodness and love? What if you've gotten mixed messages about God's love?

How would you know if you did?

Most of us believed what our elders taught us when we were young children. This could be parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, preachers or anyone in authority over us. We also came to some conclusions ourselves based on what was NOT said. Some of our conclusions were faulty because we were children and didn't have the big picture.

It is likely that some of the things you believe about God are actually not true. And some of the things you believe about yourself are also not true.

So how do you figure out what is true and what is not true?

Before we get to that, let me also mention fears. Fear is often a lie - it may be based on a partial truth, but when examined, it is usually not completely true. A lot of our barriers to receiving God's love are based on fear. So if you encounter worry or fear, ask yourself, "What is it I'm afraid of?" Try to make it a statement or see if it relates to any of the statements in the list above. For instance, "I am afraid God won't love me because …."

The love of God is not like

any other love
you have ever experienced.

The love of God is not like any other love you have ever experienced. Think about that.

The quality of the love you have experienced in the past is based on human love. Humans are flawed - we all are flawed. So you've only ever received flawed, human love.

(Except for your dog's love, which is pretty close to perfect, isn't it? They love you when you are grumpy, stinky, short-tempered and even when you've ignored them. No matter what, they offer you love.)

God's love is pure. He never has ulterior motives for showing you love. There's no manipulation involved, like there can be with people who love you, hoping you'll do something for them in return.

God's love is perfect. It doesn't change. God will always love you every day no matter what.

God's love is consuming. He doesn't just love you a little bit and then leave you. He gives you ALL of Himself every time.

God's love never fails. He won't give up on you. He won't abandon you emotionally like human beings will do or have done in the past.

God's love is eternal. It's not temporary. It goes beyond this lifetime into eternity … forever. It is the forever love your heart is longing for.

God's love is unconditional. It is not based on what you are doing or have done in the past. He doesn't love you because you did something right. He doesn't stop loving you because you did something wrong. I know that may seem shocking but it's true. He still loves you dearly even if you are "bad" based on your own standards or the standards of your culture or your family.

God's love is powerful. Nothing can stop Him from loving you. God's Love is the most powerful force there is - nothing is more powerful.

Nothing can separate you from the love of God … except your unwillingness to receive it. Isn't that amazing?! NOTHING can stop you from receiving God's love - except you.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

Death cannot separate you from the love of God.
Life cannot separate you from the love of God.
Angels cannot separate you from the love of God.
Demonic powers cannot separate you from the love of God.
The present cannot separate you from the love of God.
The future cannot separate you from the love of God.
Not a single created thing can separate you from the love of God, including you.

So let's figure out what lies you believe, even unconsciously, that prevent you from *receiving* God's love.

Then after that I'll give you some practical suggestions for HOW to receive God's love - because if you've never done it before and never met anyone else who has either, it can be an unfamiliar process. It was for me.

I discovered a little exercise that helped me to find the lies or mistruths I believed. It also helped me see what the whole truth was. It was very helpful and I used this exercise every week to help me get clear on issues in my life.

I'm going to share this exercise with you. There are a few different versions of this exercise that I've developed over the years to help me. (You can find all the exercises in my books on Freedom.) For now, I'm going to share three of them. They each follow a similar process, which anyone can do. You can do these alone or have a friend read them to you. In fact, I

might record them and put them on the internet so you can just follow along. Check my website for updates.

I would suggest that you do each of these exercises below at least once. Then wait a few days and do them all again. In fact, if you get some deep insight, you might need to do one exercise a day and give yourself some time to process the information you get. In other words, doing all three on the same day might be too much to process. Start with the first exercise you are drawn to and then see what happens.

Please DON'T JUST READ the exercises - the power comes in DOING them, from your heart. If you can't focus on this right now, then come back later when you have a few minutes to yourself in a quiet place without distractions. You DESERVE this - do at least one of them and then see what happens.

This process does not require you to figure things out with your mind. Please don't put that pressure on yourself. These exercises rely on a source of information that can help you find the truth you need to be free of the lies holding you back. Just take the first step.

* * *

Lie Detector: God Concept

Go to a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Turn off any devices that might distract you. Take a few deep breaths, letting them out slowly to help you relax and to quiet your mind.

Say these questions/statements out loud and then wait for an answer. Don't try to figure it out with your mind. An answer may come as a feeling, a thought, a picture in your mind, a word, a memory or just an inner knowing. If no answer comes to the first question, go to a different exercise – this may not be the right time for this step.

"Spirit of Truth, is there a lie I believe about God?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"Who taught me that lie?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"I forgive (name) for teaching me this lie. I forgive myself for receiving this lie and allowing it to influence my thoughts. I release myself from this lie. I give it up and let it go.

"What truth do I need to hear?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"I receive the truth that (the truth).

I encourage you to write down the answer you get to the last question, "What truth do I need to hear?" Put it on a post-it note where you can look at it each day. Meditate on it. Say it out loud to yourself. Really let it soak in – it might take awhile for it to become your new default way of perceiving God (especially if that lie was in there a long time). If you like to journal, write about how this new truth might influence your perspective. What new ideas or opportunities does this truth open up for you? How did that lie you believed hold you back?

For those who perceive God as a Trinity, it may be helpful to break down this step and ask, "Spirit of Truth, is there a lie I believe about the Father?". Then after completing the step, ask the question again separately for Jesus and then for the Holy Spirit. People have reported some amazing experiences when they have tried this.

Finding the lies you believe about God is CRUCIAL to being able to receive His love. Most people believe a lie or two about God, maybe more. Think about it. If you think God is not fair because life is so hard, you have no reason to open up to Him in a vulnerable way in order to receive His love. If you blame God for natural disasters commonly referred to as "acts of God", how can you trust Him enough to let Him into the deep places of your heart that desperately need love? We have so many barriers that can keep us from receiving God's life-giving love because of faulty conclusions we have drawn about who God is and what motivates His actions.

Did you lose someone you loved as a child or young adult and someone told you, "God

needed them so He took them"? That could cause you to doubt His goodness and blame Him for your pain of loss. If you had a father that was abusive, absent or authoritarian - that can make you afraid of having God as your Father.

If you have been hurt by the way religious people have treated you, you might blame Jesus or God consciously or unconsciously. Trust me - it's not Their fault. People are people - they do hurtful, mean things and may use religious beliefs to motivate them or to prove they are "right". I'm very sorry if that has happened to you. That's NOT God - that's misguided people.

So do the Lie Detector: God Concept exercise. Do it again a few days later. See how many lies you can get rid of so that you can truly open your heart to God's wonderful, encouraging, life-giving love! It's real and it is worth fighting for!

* * *

One day I realized that anytime I feel completely alone, unloved, unwanted, rejected or abandoned – that is a LIE. I am being deceived in my mind. God's Spirit is inside of me - I am never alone, unloved, unwanted, rejected or abandoned. NEVER. In fact, one day He showed me that since we are one with Him, it's actually impossible to be alone. He never leaves us.

The challenge was learning how to disbelieve the lies that felt so true – that were making me feel bad. I had to learn how to believe what God said was true. But it was very challenging. Can you relate?

This next exercise, the Lie Detector: Self Concept, really helped me with that. Each one of those lies was attached to a wound in my heart that I had completely forgotten about. This exercise helped me get to the root of the lie and pull it up - just like pulling weeds in the garden. Then I could plant the seed of truth in the hole that the weed lie left behind. That truth could then flourish and grow strong in my heart.

Lie Detector: Self Concept

Go to a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Turn off any devices that might distract you. Take a few deep breaths, letting them out slowly to help you relax and to quiet your mind.

Say these questions/statements out loud and then wait for an answer. Don't try to figure it out with your mind. An answer may come as a feeling, a thought, a picture in your mind, a word, a memory or just an inner knowing. If no answer comes to the first question, go to a different exercise – this may not be the right time for this step.

"Spirit of Truth, is there a lie I believe about myself?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"Who taught me that lie?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"I forgive (name) for teaching me this lie. I forgive myself for receiving this lie and allowing it to influence my thoughts. I release myself from this lie. I give it up and let it go."

"What truth do I need to hear?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"I receive the truth that (the truth)."

I encourage you to write down the answer you get to the last question, "What truth do I need to hear?" Put it on a post-it note where you can look at it each day. Meditate on it. Say it out loud to yourself. Really let it soak in – it might take awhile for it to become your new default way of perceiving yourself (especially if that lie was in there a long time). If you like to journal, write about how this new truth might influence your perspective. What new ideas or opportunities does this truth open up for you? How did that lie you believed hold you back?

I've done this exercise over and over and each time I discover a new lie I believe – and I find the truth! In fact, you can create a sheet of personal affirmations by listing the truth you receive every time you do this exercise. Read the truth out loud to yourself each day – this helps to cement it in your conscious mind. It has the power to transform your thinking and your life.

This exercise might be hard for some people to do. You might need to do the next exercise first - Fear Finder. Some of us have so many fears that we are actually afraid of finding out the truth about ourselves because we expect that it will be even more negative than we imagined. If you don't get an answer to the last question, "What truth do I need to hear?", there's probably a blockage to receiving good truths about yourself. Try the Fear Finder exercise.

If you struggle with forgiving the person who taught you the lie (and sometimes that person is yourself), then you may want to read the excerpt I've included from my book, Freedom through Forgiveness - it's just after the Fear Finder exercise. Forgiveness is a choice - it's not a feeling. You can do this, even if it is hard - I believe in you!

* * *

Fear Finder

Go to a quiet place where you will not be interrupted. Turn off any devices that might distract you. Take a few deep breaths, letting them out slowly to help you relax and to quiet your mind.

Say these questions/statements out loud and then wait for an answer. Don't try to figure it out with your mind. An answer may come as a feeling, a thought, a picture in your mind, a word, a memory or just an inner knowing. If no answer comes to the first question, go to a different exercise – this may not be the right time for this step.

Focus on a specific fear you have and ask,

"Spirit of Truth, where did this fear come from?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"Who taught me this fear?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"I forgive (name) for teaching me this fear. I release them from the harm they caused me. I forgive myself for allowing this fear to control me. I no longer choose to partner with this fear. I let it go."

Take deep cleansing breaths, release the negative emotions and let them go.

"Spirit of Truth, what can I have in exchange?" (pause and wait for an answer)

"I receive _____ in exchange for my fear of _____."
(pause and open your heart to receive)

I encourage you to write down the answer you get to the last question, "What can I have in exchange?" Put it on a post-it note where you can look at it each day. Meditate on it. Say it out loud to yourself. Really let it soak in - it might take awhile for you to really receive it into your heart, to accept that it is yours now. If you like to journal, write about how this new quality might influence you. What new ideas or opportunities does this open up for you? How did that fear hold you back in the past?

If you do not know what it is that you fear, then start by asking, "Spirit of Truth, what am I afraid of?"

* * *

The Foundation: Forgiveness

Here is a brief summary of the foundation for all the exercises in this book – the importance of forgiveness. If you cannot forgive or this is a tough subject for you, I encourage you to read my book, *Freedom through Forgiveness: The Power of Forgiveness Can Change Your Life*. You need to be able to forgive – even though it may be hard.

Below is an excerpt from that book to give you the basic idea of the importance of forgiveness and how it works to help you find freedom.

Forgiveness is an essential key to finding personal freedom. Unforgiveness is like an emotional prison - we lock up our negative feelings about a person and we hold onto them. It actually ties us to that person - even if the person is someone we'd rather forget.

The good news is - we hold the key to the prison doors. By an act of our will, we can open the door and release what is being held. What we often don't realize until later is that the one who is being set free is ourselves.

Carrying a grudge (another word for unforgiveness) actually weighs us down internally. We think we are holding the other person in the prison cell, but in reality we are holding a part of our soul, mind or emotions in that cell. Forgiveness unlocks the cell and releases the negative association we have with that person.

Many people have a misconception about forgiveness. They assume that if they forgive, they are saying that what happened didn't really matter or that the fact that they were hurt is insignificant. That's not true.

Forgiveness starts with an acknowledgement that what happened was hurtful. It assigns responsibility for the pain. By acknowledging what happened, you can begin to release the negative emotions associated with the pain and in time, you can choose to let them go.

You may think, "What they did to me is unforgivable - how can I let go of it just like that?" First of all, you don't let go of it "just like that". Forgiveness is a process that takes time and effort. Depending on the depth of the pain, it could take days, months or sometimes even years to release it. Each person's process is their own - it takes as long as it takes.

Yes, what they did was really bad. Somehow we feel that by holding onto the offense, it somehow "makes them pay" for what they did. That couldn't be further from the truth. The other person is not the one suffering - YOU ARE.

Internally, what you really want is justice. What happened was wrong - and your soul wants it to be recognized and acknowledged. Too often the person who hurt us is not willing or able to do this - but we can do it for ourselves.

After you've forgiven someone, does that mean you need to continue the relationship? Forgiveness and trust are two separate issues. Forgiveness does not "magically" make everything okay. If someone has proven to be untrustworthy or hurtful towards you, you don't have to associate with them.

Do you need to "feel forgiving" in order to forgive? No. Forgiveness is an act of your will. Sometimes you will feel compassion or understanding later, but you do not have to feel a certain way to forgive. You only have to be willing to forgive.

Many people have trouble forgiving the "good" people in their lives who did not intend to hurt them. Remember that forgiveness is not a judgment about the actions that occurred. Forgiveness is about letting go of the pain in order to find freedom. Maybe what they did was not morally "wrong" nevertheless their behavior had the consequence of hurting you. Forgiveness allows you to process that hurt and let it go. It is not an issue of "right" or "wrong".

Who is the one person we often forget to forgive? Ourselves. Many times as you go through the exercises in this book, you will discover that not only did someone else hurt you, you also hurt yourself.

For those who were raised with a faith tradition that made certain things "God's fault" (i.e. someone's death), you may need to forgive God. It may feel silly doing so, but if you find that you are very cynical and bitter towards matters of faith, chances are you are holding negative emotions against the concept of God that was presented to you. It's time to let that go. Your heart will thank you.

As you do the exercises, you might sense that you need God's forgiveness. That's good - ask God to forgive you and He will. Then you can choose to forgive those that hurt you. His

forgiveness empowers us to forgive others.

Each of the exercises in this book presents a choice to offer forgiveness. It may seem uncomfortable at first – especially if you have experienced trauma in your life. You may need help processing it – that's okay. There's nothing wrong with asking for help when you need it. Look for a counselor or therapist that can support you. Perhaps you could ask them to do these exercises with you or as part of your homework between sessions. For issues that are less serious, you may discover that offering forgiveness is easier than you thought. It does get easier to practice forgiveness the more you do it – your heart becomes accustomed to letting things go once you've experienced how freeing it is.

* * *

Let's look at that list of statements from the beginning of the chapter again. Here are some questions to ask yourself. Use the Lie Detector and Fear Finder exercises in this chapter to get to the root of what is causing these statements to feel true for you. I have found that asking questions can help bring clarity.

I don't deserve God's love. Why not? What would you have to do to be deserving of it?

I am not worthy of God's love. Why not? What would make you worthy? Is anyone else worthy? What makes them different or more worthy than you? If no one is worthy, then why did God send Jesus Christ?

God loves the whole world but not me personally. Why not? What makes you unique and not loved?

Just have faith - don't rely on your feelings. Why? God gave us feelings for a reason - they are important. Receiving God's love doesn't mean you are relying on your feelings.

God's love is not something you can actually feel. Why not? Who told you that?

God doesn't have emotions so I can't feel God's love for me. Who told you that? Here's some examples of God's emotions: Psalm 37, Psalm 86 and John 3:16. There are many more.

God is too big to notice me or care for me personally. Did you know that He notices tiny birds? Read Matthew 10:29-31. He made you and will take care of you. Consider Isaiah 46:4.

God is unknowable. Yes, God is bigger than our human ability to know Him fully. Can you know love? Only by experiencing it. Are you willing to find out what is knowable about God?

Don't go by your feelings; that's not faith. Yes, emotions can be fickle. Receiving God's love is not being led by your feelings. It's making God REAL to you, supporting your faith. Isn't that what you want?

You don't have to feel God's love, just believe in it. Why? What's wrong with feeling it too?

God's love is sound doctrine, not an experience. Why isn't it an experience too? Experiencing God's love changes your life more than words ever will. Didn't people in the Bible experience God first hand? Why not you?

God shows His love to other people but not to me. Why not? What makes you unique and not loved?

God doesn't love me - I'm too bad. I'm sorry you feel that way - that's very painful. Badness doesn't surprise God. Who told you that you were bad? Are you still bad? Is badness a choice you are making today? There are bad choices, but there are no bad people because we were all made in God's image. Is God bad?

I'm too far away from God. I'm sorry you feel that way - that's very painful. If you feel far away, that means that you CAN come closer, if you wish. Do you want to come closer to God's love? What would that look like? Are you willing?

I've done a lot of bad things - God couldn't possibly love me. Badness doesn't surprise God. He offers forgiveness for bad choices. He wants to hear from you - you can make new choices that are not bad. He will give you that power, if you want it. Do you want to receive His love, if you could?

I failed God. I'm sorry - that's a very painful feeling. Do you think God understands why you failed? Does He hold that against you, knowing that you are just dust? (Psalm 103) Would you like to apologize and receive His love and forgiveness? He offers second chances.

I turned my back on God when I was disappointed by the church. I'm sorry - that sounds very painful. You're not alone - many have done this too. Fortunately, God is not the same as church. He is His own person. People will let you down and disappoint you. Would you be willing to get to know God outside of a religious environment? Where have you sensed Him? He is not far from you (Acts 17).

God let me down - God wasn't who I thought He was. I'm sorry - that sounds very painful. This happens to many people - you're not alone. How do you know who God is? Is it possible it was religious training that told you who God was - instead of God Himself? Maybe they were wrong or there was a miscommunication in the truth of who God is? What if He is better than who you thought He was? Are you willing to forgive God for not acting according to your expectations?

I don't know what I believe about God. Why would God love me? You don't have to know what you believe about God in order to begin to open your heart to the idea that He loves you. What if God loves you just because He wants to? What if it is His choice and not dependent on you? Will you let Him love you, even if it makes no sense?

I don't believe in God's love. Why should I? Look at all the evil in the world and especially the bad things religion has done in the name of God. I am so sorry for your pain. Many people feel this way - you're not alone. Experiencing a lot of bad things can erode your faith in goodness - that's completely understandable. God hates those things that have hurt you. He wants to offer you His love to heal that pain you are carrying. It will give you hope again. Would you like to have hope? Would you like to feel better? Ask Him to show you His love in action.

Where can you see it? People often personify the goodness of God - where do you see people doing things to help others?

These statements and questions are not meant to be pat answers to your pain. They are to help you think about what is behind your pain. I hope they are helpful. If not, feel free to find what works for you. Talking to a counselor that specializes in spiritual development can help.

I am praying that you find the truth you need to set your heart free to receive God's love because it will change your life - I promise! It is impossible to receive God's love and stay the same - it changes your perspective and the way you think about yourself and others. God bless you, dear one, on your journey toward wholeness.

You were made in the image of Love.
Love is the very essence of who you are.
When you feel unwanted, rejected or unloved,
remember this -
You cannot be unloved because
Love is WHO YOU ARE.

Ways to Experience God's Presence and Love

Before I discovered how to receive the love of God for me personally, I tried everything I could to get closer to God. I went to church services, I read the Bible and I prayed several times a day. I went to special conferences that promised I would encounter God in a deeper way. These were not bad things - I'm sure they helped me. But I didn't experience what I desperately needed - God's loving presence.

There were some special times that occurred where I experienced God's presence for a few minutes. Sometimes this happened at the height of a worship service where the singing seemed to take us to new levels of awareness of the awesomeness of God. One time I was at a conference and the presence of God seemed to fill the room. The musicians stopped playing, but everyone in the audience kept singing the chorus of the song we had been singing, *Agnus Dei*. The air became electric with possibility. It felt like God was right there in our midst!

The people kept singing, not sure what to do next. Eventually they stopped and the worship band left the platform. The service continued on as usual. Nothing spectacular happened. It was a wonderful experience, but I didn't connect with God's love through it.

So what made the difference for me? Let me tell you my story. Perhaps it will inspire you to find what I found.

A friend of mine left a book at my house called, *Experiencing the Father's Embrace* by Jack Frost. I picked it up and read a little bit. One line jumped off the page for me. He said, You have already received all of the love of God that you are ever going to receive. That shocked me! How could that be? I felt so empty. How could I have already received all of the love of God? The author went on to say that since God's Spirit is in my spirit and God is Love, then I have access to all of the love of God every moment of every day.

I remember reading that and thinking, How is this possible and no one ever explained this to me? HOW do I get this love I so desperately long for?

I had been raised in a church atmosphere that made it seem like God was "up there" in a heavenly realm and it was up to us to live in such a way that He would "come down" to visit us. I often heard people pray, "Come, Holy Spirit," as though He was somewhere else and was invited to join us.

I knew I had the Holy Spirit inside of me, but it never occurred to me that this gave me access to God's love. Like real, tangible access to God's love. And that I didn't have to wait for a special gathering with other believers in order to receive it. It was available to me 24/7. Really?

Thank you, Jack Frost!

I think this highlights the first step in learning how to receive God's love - you have to believe it's possible. That's why getting over the barriers first is so important. If you have lies or fears that prevent you from believing it's possible, you'll never receive it because you don't think you can.

Do I believe it's possible to receive
God's love for me personally?

Next, I was challenged by the idea that the love I needed was in God's Spirit, which was inside of me. So how do I access that?

I had no idea. I bet you don't either!

So I prayed, "Holy Spirit, will you please show me how to receive God's love on the inside of me?"

Shortly after this, I started listening to a teaching series by Arthur Burk called, *Nurturing Your Spirit*. He explained that you have a spirit and a soul inside your body. They are two distinct

parts of you. I had always sensed that, but I didn't have the language to explain it. He did an excellent job describing the two parts and helping me recognize the difference.

Your soul is the human, earthly part of you - your personality, your likes and dislikes, your sense of humor and what you are known for on the earth. It's the part that contains your thoughts, your emotions and your choices. Some might call this your ego.

Your spirit is the part of you that connects with God most deeply. Some say that this is where imagination, intuition and conscience are. It's the part of you that longs for something bigger than your everyday life. This is where you dream of what could be possible for you - the ideas that drive your purpose in life. This is your true identity, beyond all the roles you may play on the earth (i.e. spouse, parent, friend, employee). This is your most authentic self - the way God designed you to be.

Your spirit is where the Holy Spirit connects with you - you are one with God's Spirit if you have chosen to open your heart to Him and follow His ways.

I realized that it was my soul that felt empty. It was my soul that longed for comfort from God's love. When I was tapped into my spirit, I felt empowered by God's Spirit. I felt strong and capable. I had love, joy, peace, patience - the fruit of the spirit. I could easily give those out to other people, but the challenge was to figure out how to give those to myself!

I don't know how to explain this next part because it is beyond words. Let me try to describe it using a picture. Imagine that there is a door between your spirit and your soul. On the inside of you, you can open this door from your soul and invite the Spirit of God to minister to you. Instead of imagining that God is "up there" somewhere in the sky, imagine that He is right there inside of you. It might help to imagine a place you like to relax and see God sitting on a couch, waiting for you. Go over and sit beside Him. You can lay your head on His shoulder or lean back into His arms. Or just sit there with Him and sense His presence - whatever feels most comfortable to you.

The point is to find a way to teach your soul how to open up to God's loving presence right where you are. I feel Him now, even as I write these words. He wants to come close to you -

are you willing? Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Close your eyes and imagine your favorite relaxing spot. Then see God there. If you can't "see" God in your mind, then just an outline of a person will work. Some people see Jesus because it's easier to imagine Him.

When I first started doing this, I didn't have the idea of using my imagination to picture it. I just intuitively began to open my heart on the inside and then I asked Holy Spirit to connect me with God's love. I sat very still and I could feel this gentle warmth on the inside. I let it saturate my awareness.

At first I could only do this for a minute or two and then I'd get distracted. I had to teach myself how to sit still long enough to receive. Do you ever have that problem? So many things are vying for our attention day and night - it's hard to just sit still and receive.

The more I practiced this, the easier it got to sit still for a little longer. I would ask, "Holy Spirit, please help me to connect with God's love now." Then I would take a deep breath, open my heart on the inside and wait. As soon as I sensed His presence, I would focus on that and begin to draw in that warm love. It felt like I was drinking it in, in my soul. And boy was I thirsty!

This changed me SO much! I was no longer running after external things to help me connect with God. I had Him right here inside of me! I didn't have to struggle on my own anymore. I didn't have to call someone to pray with me because I felt so discouraged and drained from life. Now I could connect with God's life-giving love any time I wanted to. It was so incredibly transformational that I was shocked NO ONE had ever told me how to do this before!

The gospel message I heard was that God so loved the world that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ. But the emphasis was always on what I had to DO in order to follow God. I can't recall a single sermon or teaching that explained to me how to EXPERIENCE God's love for myself - like literally FEEL it, not just believe in it.

We emphasize faith a lot in spiritual communities and that's good. But many scriptures also talk about receiving. Here are a few.

"Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." Luke 18:17

But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him. Colossians 2:6

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Hebrews 12:28

Receiving is an important part of
being in God's family and enjoying His kingdom!

* * *

Breathing with God exercise

I developed a simple exercise to help me learn how to sit still and receive. I call it "Breathing with God". I still do this exercise whenever I need to quiet my mind and emotions and receive from the Lord.

Close your eyes and take a deep breath slowly. Imagine the Spirit of God filling you as you breathe in.

Hold your breath and count to five mentally. Let the breath out as you say, "Thank you, Jesus."

Set a timer on your cell phone for one minute. Do the breathing exercise. You can use different phrases like, "I love you, Jesus" or "You're wonderful, Jesus" if you want to add variety.

Notice how you feel after doing this exercise. I feel relaxed, at peace and I have mental clarity.

Start by doing this exercise once a day.

Once it feels comfortable doing this for one minute every day, set the timer for three minutes. You'll notice an even greater peace and clarity of mind. You will become more aware of God's presence and His love.

Keep doing it every day. You can do this more than once a day, if you wish. After a while you will look forward to your special time with God each day. That's when you can stop using the timer. Spend as much time as you want. The more you do this, the more you will become aware of God's presence and His love throughout your day, not just during the Breathing with God exercise.

Don't give up. Let your desire for God draw you to this time. If you lack desire, then when you breathe out say, "Draw me, Lord."

What is God's presence like? Some people sense a presence (or energy) of love or of peace. Others sense companionship – like someone is there with them and they are no longer alone. You'll know when it happens to you – it's personal and unique.

As you do the Breathing with God exercise, you might experience some discomfort. God's presence can feel intense sometimes. His love can reveal issues you didn't know you had that were hidden in the back of your mind. If you feel afraid, go and do the Fear Finder exercise in this book. If you feel unworthy of God's love or unsure of His love for you, do the Lie Detector exercises. You might even discover that you are holding a grudge against God for some reason - give yourself permission to examine that and consider how to forgive Him. Don't run from the feelings, thoughts or fears that come up as you let God love you. His love displaces fears and lies. His love heals all wounds. Let Him love you back to life!

I discovered that the more I experienced inner healing from past emotional wounds, the easier it was to receive God's love. It was like those wounds had filled up and hardened my heart like a pile of rocks. The more rocks I removed from my heart, the more room there was to receive God's love! Soon I could literally soak in His love like soaking in a warm bath.

Soaking in God's Love

A close friend of mine told me that soaking in God's love and presence was the most healing experience he ever had. He suffered years of abuse as a child. Soaking in God's presence helped him open his heart to the deep places that needed to be healed by God's love, places he had never experienced human love. I saw the huge transformation in his life. He said he spent hours just letting God love him.

There is special music called Soaking music that was developed for this purpose. You can find it on YouTube and other places where music is offered. Look for Alberto and Kimberly Rivera Soaking sessions. Julie True has one called *Spirit to Spirit* that I really enjoy. Graham Cooke also has a wonderful one called *Inheritance* where he speaks God's love for you. I have listened to that one over and over. My friend was the one who introduced me to that track - thank you, Andrew!

Here's how I soak in God's love. First I prepare the environment where I will be soaking. I pick a quiet room in the house. I remove all distractions (i.e. turn off cell phones, televisions, etc. and notify family that I don't want to be disturbed for a while). I close the blinds or turn down the lights so that there are no bright lights in my eyes. I put on something comfortable – sweats and a t-shirt or shorts.

Next I choose some "soaking music" and play it through headphones or the stereo. Then I sit in a comfortable chair or lay down. I close my eyes and let myself relax. It usually takes a while to get my mind to settle down. I take several deep breaths slowly and try to quiet my thoughts.

Then I just let myself BE. I just sit there. I don't specifically pray or worship. I am just waiting in the presence of God – I open my heart to His love. Often I will begin to feel the presence of God around me. The soaking music is uniquely crafted to help you "tune in" to God. I focus on God's presence and His love. Just like being with another person – I focus on HIM and not me. I pray, "Lord, please increase my awareness of Your presence." And He does.

It is very relaxing and it restores my soul when I soak. I highly recommend it. It's okay if you fall asleep – it's the intention that matters.

The more you practice receiving God's love,
the easier it becomes!

I've noticed since I started receiving God's love that I no longer fear being rejected by other people. I realized that if someone rejects me (or doesn't seem to like me), it's THEIR issue, not mine. I am already loved, valued and appreciated by the One that matters most in my life. God commands us to love each other and if they don't love me, that's their problem. This frees me up to just be myself without fear of rejection - hallelujah!

Using Your Imagination

Using your imagination in your relationship with God is an ancient practice of contemplation made popular by Ignatius of Loyola who lived in the 1500s. It can help you connect with God in your daily life. Some use it to connect with a particular story in the Bible like Jesus feeding the 5000. What would it be like to be there in that story? What would you feel, smell, hear, see and taste? You can ask the Holy Spirit to show you through your imagination.

I like to use my imagination to connect with God in today's world. For instance, when I was single and driving alone at night, I would imagine Jesus sitting in the passenger seat next to me. It made me feel more secure. He said He is always with us, right? So if Jesus was with you right now, where would He be? I would reach over and hold His hand and often I could feel the warm energy of His love in my hand as I drove.

When I am stressed about something and I'm having a hard time praying, I often imagine Jesus sitting in an empty chair in my living room. It started late one night when I couldn't sleep because I was worried about something. I got out of bed and sat in the living room in the dark. Suddenly I sensed the Lord's presence. I opened my eyes and turned to where I sensed Him. There was an empty chair in that spot so I imagined Jesus sitting there. I was able to talk to Him about what I was thinking about and His presence helped me not feel so alone in my concerns. It was comforting and I knew He was going to take care of everything that concerned me.

Using my imagination helps me to anchor God's presence in the here and now on earth. I want my spirituality to be practical, not just theoretical. If God's presence is not making a difference in my daily life, then why not? What obstacles are preventing me from living in God's love right now? Am I too focused on earthly things and the cares of this life? Am I making room for God to show up in my daily life?

I know a lady who wanted to make Jesus more real in her life. She decided to have tea with Jesus every day. She would heat water on the stove in her teapot. She would set out two cups and saucers on the table. She would brew the tea and pour some in both cups. Then she would sit down at the table and imagine Jesus sitting in the other chair. She would read the Bible and talk to Him out loud as though He was sitting right there, visiting her and sharing a cup of tea together. She said it really opened her heart to His presence because it wasn't just a theory anymore. He was really there with her.

Doesn't that sound like something a child might do? Jesus said that we must become like little children to enter the kingdom of God. Are you willing to give yourself permission to use your imagination to connect with the Lord? Ask the Holy Spirit what would help you to connect more deeply with God's love.

As you become more aware of God's presence,
it becomes easier to receive His love.

The main thing is to become more aware of God's presence around you and within you no matter where you are. As you become more aware of Him, it becomes easier to receive His

love. In fact, one way I use my imagination is to step back on the inside and imagine myself surrounded by God's love and presence. Paul said, In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). So my inner being is surrounded by His love! It feels like a big, warm hug, surrounding my soul. It's wonderful! Try it!

Before I knew how to receive the love of God, I felt distant from God's presence. There were times when I had the house to myself, I would turn the stereo up really loud and sing my favorite worship songs. I was trying to connect with the presence of God. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't.

But now things are different. The other day everyone left and I had the house to myself. I thought, Oh good, I can play worship music really loud and sing and worship. But then I stopped myself. I realized I didn't have to do that anymore because it was so much easier to simply tap into the presence of God within me. So I went to my office and sat down. I became aware of God's presence within me and then I began to sing just for the sheer joy of it. To release what was inside of me into the atmosphere around me. Not because I was trying to somehow reach heaven and connect with God's presence and bring Him down, but because He was already right here with me, surrounding me, within me and I wanted to express that experience through singing. What a huge shift in perspective I have now!

Cultivating Gratitude

One night I asked Holy Spirit, "Why don't people feel/experience the love God has for them? What is the obstacle that prevents them from perceiving His Love and receiving His love?"

Holy Spirit showed me that the air is SATURATED with the Love of God, but we often cannot perceive it. One way to become more aware of it is to cultivate gratitude. Being grateful is a choice. But we often focus on what's wrong rather than on what's right.

Start paying attention to all the good in your life, the silent mercies you take for granted every day. Open your emotional heart and say to God, "Thank you. I know that is You." It will transform the way you see the world around you. You will begin to feel God's Love for you – it's inescapable. You are living IN IT!

Remember, in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He IS Love. Yet many people do not perceive or feel God's love for them. They feel like an orphan, alone and not taken care of.

How do you know that someone loves you? By the way they treat you. God is being good to us every single day – we just don't pay enough attention to it. Change your focus and you'll see it!

Shifting Your Internal State

Many years ago when I was first learning how to receive God's love for myself, I often felt overwhelmed by life. I would encounter a situation that made me very anxious. I knew I needed God's love but when my emotions were overwhelmed, I couldn't figure out how to receive what I needed. During that time I learned a process that helped me tremendously.

First, I would say out loud, "I come out of agreement with fear and anxiety. I release trust in the Lord and peace into my soul." I would take a deep breath. Then I would say, "I call my spirit to attention. Please come forward and lead. Soul, please go in the back and rest. Holy Spirit, please lead me now." I would take another deep breath. Sometimes I would do the Breathing with God exercise, if I had time.

Without fail, every time I did this process, I would start to feel better. It would enable me to connect with God's love, usually within about 10 minutes or so. I would go from being overwhelmed and unable to connect with God at all, to being calm and grounded and open to His love.

This gave me great confidence! I began to realize how incredibly important it was to keep myself grounded in His love and following the leading of His Spirit, moment-by-moment throughout my day. His love is so empowering! It enables you to see things from a completely different perspective. Instead of feeling overwhelmed and unable to handle things, I could feel loved, secure and confident. What a big change that is!

I've noticed that sometimes I feel heavy or discouraged because of things around me – I sense the anxiety in people around me at the grocery store, for instance. Or I look in the eyes of people walking past me at a shopping center and their eyes have no light in them. It's so sad. I have been praying about this and Jesus told me to come to Him and open my heart to receive His love. I stop what I am doing and ask Him to fill my heart with His love and I feel it happening. I can feel this loving energy fill my heart and it removes the sadness or discouragement – it heals my heart.

Anytime you need love, you can stop and ask for it. If you feel stuck and you don't sense His love right away, then ask for the grace to be able to receive His love. Grace is God's enabling power to do something. Ask Holy Spirit to help you open your heart to receive. You will be so glad you did!

Here's another situation you might encounter. We all feel lonely from time to time. What can make us feel better? People can give us companionship but our soul longs for a depth of connection that people often cannot offer. We each have a God-shaped hole inside of us that only a close, loving relationship with God can fill.

The next time you feel that empty lonely feeling, ask God to help you, "God, please open my heart to Your love. I need you. Thank you." Then on the inside, open your heart. Expect Him to fill that place with His presence and He will. It's tangible – you can feel it. Some say it's a warm feeling like liquid honey, others say it is a peaceful cloud surrounding them, making them feel safe.

I hope that this book has helped you realize that you too can have this experience. You CAN receive God's love and it WILL change your life. You focus on the receiving and the change will just happen, like a domino effect. When you feel loved, deeply loved on the inside, it changes the way you interact with others. You suddenly find yourself more patient with them. You become less self-centered and impatient because love is patient and kind (I Corinthians 13). You no longer envy others because now you have all that you need in God's love. You realize how amazing God's love is and you want to share it with others. God's love fills you with joy so you become a happier person.

The opposite of fear and anxiety is love. God's perfect love removes your fears (I John 4:18). As you let God's love fill you, you become a more peaceful person inside. This dramatically affects your relationships because when we feel afraid, we try to control or manipulate other people to do what we want them to do. Most of us do this unconsciously because we want to feel safe. God's love makes you feel safer than anything else in the world! So no more drama! People will be drawn to you because you are now a safe place for them.

As you allow God to love you,
it becomes easier for you
to love those around you.

As you allow God to love you, it becomes easier for you to love those around you. As you allow God's acceptance of you to sink in, you are able to accept others with their human faults. As you humble yourself to receive His love like a little child, you will be less likely to judge and condemn others. You will be able to see others as equals - all equally loved by your heavenly Father!

So many small changes start happening in your mind, your emotions and in your perspective on life. I can't wait to see what will happen for you! But it doesn't just happen overnight. It happens as you keep receiving God's love day after day. Like a seed that is planted, it grows inside of you, transforming you from the inside out.

So how do you make sure this happens?

Taking Time to Receive God's Love

Learning how to receive God's love is not a one time experience. It is a daily practice that will change your life as you let His love saturate your mind, your will and your emotions. It becomes much easier to love your neighbor as you learn how to let God love you.

I make sure to take time to receive God's love every day because I need it! Do you need it too?

So how do you do this on a daily basis?

First, you might not realize this but YOU ARE A PRIORITY.

God thinks you are very important. You might not feel very important, but He says you are. In fact, you may want to do the Lie Detector exercise on any belief you have that says, I don't really matter. Because when you realize that you are a priority, you will change how you spend your time.

Time is a very precious thing - we each are given the same amount of it and what we do with it matters a lot. Many of us give our time away to things that are temporary like entertainment. Or we devote our time to people or places that make us feel good in the moment, but may also be draining too much of our energy. We tend to fill our lives with things in an attempt to fill that empty place inside.

I would like to encourage you to start a daily practice. Every day for 5 minutes, spend time receiving God's love. Make some room for God to love you. Get alone with Him. Find a way to make it happen. If you can't get away at home, drive somewhere and sit in your car. Or go for a walk. Get alone. I can feel God's presence so much more when I am alone.

As you do this each day, you will find yourself looking forward to it. You'll become hooked!

You may want to spend time receiving God's love in the morning when you first wake up and then again at night before going to bed. You don't have to feel guilty for taking so much time for yourself - you are becoming a more loving person by taking this time! You'll become a more patient and kind parent, spouse or friend. The people in your life will be so glad you took the time away from them to receive God's love!

Think about how to get that 5 minutes of time each day. Start there. See what happens. You will be so glad that you did!

What hinders you from doing this? Is something else a higher priority? What could be higher than this?

Resources I Recommend

Experiencing the Father's Embrace by Jack Frost

Jack Frost had an encounter with the Father's Love that changed his life. The book is about his experience and how it changed him – as a pastor, as a father and as a husband. For me, God used this book to make some things "click" in my heart that I had never realized before. One line I'll always remember – "You have already received all of the love of God that you will ever receive." That told me that when I felt unloved, then something was deceiving me because I already had all the love of God I needed in my spirit – where the Holy Spirit was. The challenge for me was figuring out how to access it so I could FEEL it. Thankfully, the Father showed me how to do this and now I can't imagine living without daily access to His love. I highly recommend this book. There are also some DVDs available of Jack Frost teaching this material at a conference. I watched them – they are also very good. Some of his material is still on YouTube as of the writing of this book.

Jack Frost on YouTube - Here's a playlist with several of his videos on this topic:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdislmJBR8M0651LuLGzNwk3Qu0v_4NOA

Jack Frost's website: *https://www.shilohplace.org/*

His family continues his ministry since Jack has transitioned to his eternal life in heaven. They offer workshops in person, personal ministry as well as books, audio and video teachings.

Father's Love Letter by Father Heart Communications

This is a YouTube video that expresses God's heart for you clearly and compassionately. It is wonderful to listen to and share with others. Their website offers free resources: *https://www.fathersloveletter.com/*

Freedom through Forgiveness: The Power of Forgiveness Can Change Your Life by Sandy Walker

If you cannot forgive or this is a tough subject for you, I encourage you to read this book. It can help you forgive, even when it is hard. The power of forgiveness can release you from feeling afraid or anxious, feeling like you don't belong, feeling bad about who you are, feeling unable to break free from your past, feeling "stuck" in relationships and much more. Stories of people who have experienced significant change as a result of following the steps of forgiveness are included. Appropriate for both older teenagers and adults.

If you enjoyed the Fear Finder and Lie Detector exercises, you might also enjoy my book, *30 Days to Freedom: Daily Exercises to Set Your Heart Free*. Great to use as a source for daily healing. You can do one exercise each day of the month or pick and choose which ones are right for you. Short vignettes help you see how the exercise applies in real life.

Inheritance by Graham Cooke

This is a video on YouTube where Graham Cooke speaks the Father's heart of love for you. I have listened to this over and over to let it sink into my mind and heart. Take some time to listen to it.

Nurturing Your Spirit by Arthur Burk

Arthur Burk brings to light concepts of soul and spirit that I have never heard anywhere else. I've listened to it several times. Do you know how to tell if you are operating out of your soul or out of your spirit? Did you know there is a difference? I certainly didn't. Yet learning this difference has made a HUGE impact in my life and my walk with God.

Daddy, You Love Me: Living in the Approval of Your Heavenly Father by Brent Lokker

This is a wonderful book that helps you take a minute to receive God's love. Each chapter has practical suggestions for how to accept and receive God's love - it's very challenging, especially if this is a new concept for you. Prepare to be stretched by how much God delights in you!

Soaking Sessions by Alberto and Kimberly Rivera

The Riveras have many albums of soaking music, most are live albums. I really enjoy their music – most of it has singing, some are instrumental. Each one has its own tone – so listen to clips to see which one fits the mood you are looking for. Sometimes the singing distracts

me – sometimes it is exactly what I need. I've heard them in person and they are really authentic – it comes through in their recordings as well. You can find them on YouTube also. Be aware that some other creators on YouTube call their music "soaking music", but often it is just instrumental music. The Riveras and others like them specifically create music that helps you connect with God's presence and that is a unique aspect of their music. I can feel the difference and you will too.

Spirit to Spirit by Julie True

This is one of my favorite soaking albums. It is very peaceful. Julie sings on this album - it's very calming and not distracting. In fact, I find that it helps me to focus on the Lord. I often leave it playing quietly in my living room. Whenever I pass by the room, it ministers to my spirit. Julie True has many albums – you can find clips on YouTube or wherever music is sold.

Final Thoughts

So now what - I read the book, what's next?

The main point of this book is to raise your awareness that it is possible for you to receive God's love and experience it for yourself - that His love is real and tangible and not just good doctrine or a theoretical concept.

I shared some barriers you might experience in receiving His love and suggestions for how to overcome them. I also gave some examples of ways I have experienced God's love for me and how to cultivate an awareness of His presence in your daily life.

This is an ongoing process. This is not something you read about and then move on to the next thing. This is something you cultivate a daily awareness of - living in His amazing love for you!

I hope this little book has inspired you to go deeper, knowing there is more for you to experience with your heavenly Father. Keep it as a handy reference to remind you to use the tools I've included to help you let go of lies, find the truth, breathe, soak, imagine, be grateful and shift your internal state to enjoy His tangible love. This is worth taking time to do every day, even just for 5 minutes.

Please share your experience with others. They need to know they can have this too!

If you have any questions or would like to contact me, you can reach me through my website: *https://destinysfreedom.com/*. I'd love to hear how this book has helped you. It encourages me to hear from my readers so please don't hesitate to reach out.

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I give you permission to be you - to be seen and heard and loved. You don't have to pretend to be someone else in order to be loved.

You are loved when you mess up. You are loved when you make choices that create problems that seem unfixable. You are loved when you fail. You are still loved.

You are worthy of God's love because He says you are.

God loves you personally and He will show you proof of that by special things He will do just for you.

You can rely on God's feelings for you - they won't change. He will always love you, no matter what.

God wants you to feel and experience and know His love for you. God's love is knowable - you can experience it first hand.

God will take care of you. He's always there for you, even when you can't see it.

Nothing you've done in the past will make Him love you less. Nothing you do in the future will make Him stop loving you.

You are never too far away from God - He is as close as your breath.

God offers second chances - if you've turned away, simply turn back to Him and apologize. He's waiting with open arms.

Open your heart to real love because it's what you really want, isn't it? Even if you're not sure what you believe, please believe this - God is love and He loves you very, very much.

May the Lord direct your heart into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

(2 Thessalonians 3:5)

I love you.

I believe in you.

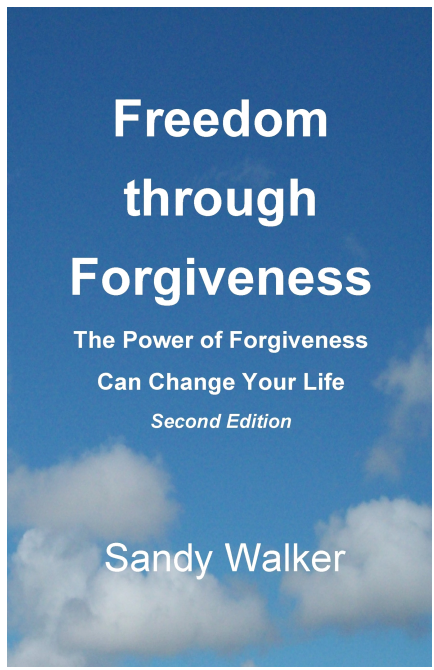
You can do this!

About the Author

Sandy Walker has been a teacher in the Christian church for over 25 years. She enjoys sharing with others what Jesus has taught her. Her passion is to help people receive God's love through a close relationship with Him. You can contact Sandy through her website https://destinysfreedom.com/

Also by Sandy Walker

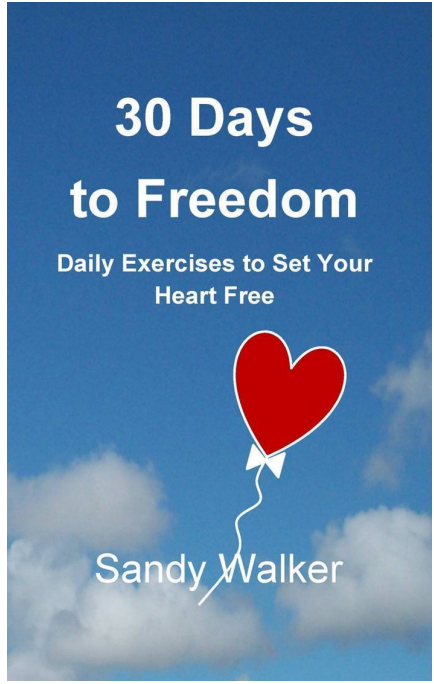
If you enjoyed the exercises in this book, you may want to continue with my other books on emotional freedom. I have discovered the more free I am inside, the more of God's love I can receive!



Freedom through Forgiveness: The Power of Forgiveness Can Change Your Life

https://amzn.to/3LYSPZU

The power of forgiveness can release you from feeling afraid or anxious, feeling like you don't belong, feeling bad about who you are, feeling unable to break free from your past, feeling "stuck" in relationships and much more. Stories of people who have experienced significant change as a result of following the steps of forgiveness are included. Appropriate for both older teenagers and adults.



30 Days to Freedom: Daily Exercises to Set Your Heart Free

https://amzn.to/4npjigj

Great to use as a source for daily healing. These exercises are simple to practice and only take a few moments each day. You can do one exercise each day of the month or pick and choose which ones are right for you. Short vignettes help you see how the exercise applies in real life.